

Third Party Opinion

Projects: India

- (i) Calcutta Transport Infrastructure Development Project (CTIDP); (ii) Eastern Karnataka Afforestation Project (EKAP); (iii) Tamil Nadu Afforestation Project (TAP)

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Relevance

All the three projects under evaluation, the CTIDP in urban transport and EKAP and TAP under forest development are extremely relevant, ex-post and ex-ante, in terms of project development goals and objectives that are in alignment with the national/state development plans. The Government of India (GoI) has accorded highest priority for development of basic infrastructure with added thrust on urban India, which is emerging as the engine of growth in the new millennium. Efficient, reliable, safe and sustainable multimodal mass transit systems are fundamental to the National Urban Transport Policy, 2005 which got reinforced under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). CTIDP which is largely supply driven, has supported policy design by facilitating coordination in synergizing spatial and transport planning and in designing coordination mechanism that leverage the capacities of key institutional actors both at the state and at national level. The forestry projects are demand driven and participatory in approach and are in alignment with the National Forest Policy, 1988 and supported the development goals of increasing forest cover, sustainable yield, equity and inclusion of the marginalized and the vulnerable. All projects have accorded great focus on environmental sustainability and contributed to carbon sequestration in line with the Kyoto protocol. Participatory approaches in resource management emerging as a new creed in development and resource governance and issues of equity and forest rights have in fact its seed planted in these projects supported by JICA. The objectives of the projects are also highly consistent with the needs and priorities of India, specifically the project states, in terms of incremental investments in priority sectors having high marginal efficiency of capital, in strengthening urban transportation, infusion of technology, and access to resources, environmental sustainability and resource conservation. The key policy outcomes, facilitated/triggered by the projects are; urban transport policy and harmonization of spatial and transport planning, participatory resource management, inclusion and the principle of subsidiarity. However, an area that is yet to be dovetailed is the much needed institutional alignment with the Panchayati Raj Institutions and decentralized governance, especially in management of CPR (Common Property Resource) and also in sustainable management of urban transportation.

The projects are also in conformity with JICA's vision of inclusive and dynamic development focused on climate change, food, water and livelihood security, institutional and policy reforms and improved governance.

Sustainability

All the projects are sustainable by virtue of the strength in design elements incorporating the lessons learned from similar programmes, broad based institutional architecture involving key stakeholders and in financial sustainability. Institutionally; the key anchor of the projects are Governmental departments, technically; the capacities created have not only facilitated the maintenance of the projects, but also contributed in implementing new projects in the pipeline; and financially; the maintenance budgets ensured relatively better maintenance. From the demand side, emerging client's power in demanding accountability and quality services, participation and ownership have ensured sustainability. Accordingly, sustainability has been ensured both from supply and demand side.

The high survival rate of plantations is in itself an indicator of sustainability, reinforced by Forest Development Funds and social fencing techniques for regulation by Joint Forest Management (JFM)/ Village Forest Committees (VFCs). The projects have also significantly facilitated institutional sustainability by strengthening social capital among local communities leading to women empowerment and creating financial multiplier by way of income, employment and generation of new business practitioners. The forest programmes have also supported the principle of self regulation, social audit and community voice in resource conservation and management. The newly created Hooghly River Bridge Commission (HRBC) and the technical capacity created and toolkit provided by inspection manual have significantly contributed to the sustainability and accountability of CTIDP with adequate budgetary provision for operation and maintenance.

Sustainability dimensions of delayed stream of outcomes as a result of significant time overrun and of poor cost recovery in the context of potential budgetary constraints that may undermine timely maintenance are key concerns to be addressed for future supply driven projects. Project monitoring framework that will ensure sustainable forest practices are to be institutionalized with added focus on process/ social audit; mandatory maintenance budget and Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) in case where maintenance is envisaged through fiscal support. For forest resource sustainability, however, one need to further integrate the energy substitution possibilities and multiple short term needs of dependent communities into the long term goals of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), to obviate negative welfare trade off.

All the three projects could be categorized as pioneers in experimenting with new concepts and learning and in successfully pilot testing innovations in terms of relevance and sustainability.